

COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. 6329



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE MEMORIAL

Arlington Navy Annex
Design Concept Plans
Arlington, Virginia

Submission by the Department of Defense

March 12, 2003

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of concept design pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1)).

Commission Action

The Commission:

- Approves the conceptual design of the Air Force Memorial at the Arlington Navy Annex, Arlington, Virginia, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.61(73.10) 41143.
- Encourages the Department of Defense (DoD) to consult with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Arlington County Government during the development of the Navy Annex master plan and the Pentagon revised master plan to develop an urban design plan for the area between the Pentagon and the future Air Force Memorial with the goal of improving pedestrian and vehicular connections and circulation patterns.
- Recommends that DoD and Air Force Memorial Foundation (AFMF) include the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer, along with Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer, in its Section 106 consultation on the potential visual effects of the memorial.
- Recommends that in the preparation of preliminary and final site and building plans, the DoD and the AFMF pursue a lighting scheme that does not include a flashing red light but utilizes another form of lighting to illuminate the memorial at night, to the satisfaction of the Federal Aviation Administration.

- Recommends that the DoD and AFMF study removing the honor guard statuary on the parade ground because of its:
 - Incompatibility with the memorial's striking contemporary design
 - Possible interference with the ceremonial activities of the parade ground.
- Recommends that the DoD and AFMF keep the memorial open until 10:00 p.m. so that visitors can enjoy the night views.
- Recommends that the DoD and AFMF provide additional parking spaces if the planned number of parking spaces are insufficient.

Deborah B. Young
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Revised 3/10/03
S. Sechrist

NCPC File No. 6329



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE MEMORIAL

Arlington Navy Annex
Design Concept Plans
Arlington, VA

Submission by the Department of Defense

March 6, 2003

Abstract

The Department of Defense (DoD), on behalf of the Air Force Memorial Foundation (AFMF), has submitted the conceptual design for the U.S. Air Force Memorial. The memorial will be located at the promontory of the Arlington Navy Annex property overlooking the Pentagon, and affording views into the Monumental Core. The National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2002 legislated the memorial's location at the Navy Annex site – which is one of 20 prime sites identified in the Commission's 2001 *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*. The design of the memorial is intended to evoke the soaring images of flight, while providing a spectacular visual gateway into the Nation's Capital.

Commission Action Requested by the Applicant

Approval of concept design pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1)).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

- **Approves** the conceptual design of the Air Force Memorial at the Arlington Navy Annex, Arlington, Virginia, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.61(73.10) 41143.
- **Encourages** DoD to consult with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Arlington County Government during the development of the Navy Annex master plan and the Pentagon revised master plan to develop an urban design plan for the area between the Pentagon and the future Air Force Memorial with the goal of improving pedestrian and vehicular connections and circulation patterns.

- **Recommends** that DoD and AFMF include DC SHPO, along with VA SHPO, in its Section 106 consultation on the potential visual effects of the memorial.
- **Recommends** that in the preparation of preliminary and final site and building plans, the DoD and the AFMF pursue a lighting scheme that does not include a flashing red light but utilizes another form of lighting to illuminate the memorial at night, to the satisfaction of the FAA.
- **Recommends** that the DoD and AFMF study removing the honor guard statuary on the parade ground because of its:
 - Incompatibility with the memorial's striking contemporary design
 - Possible interference with the ceremonial activities of the parade ground.

* * *

BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The Department of Defense (DoD), on behalf of the Air Force Memorial Foundation (AFMF), has submitted the design concept for the Air Force Memorial at the Navy Annex site in Arlington, Virginia. The Commission's review authority is advisory under Section 5 of the Planning Act, which requires each federal agency, prior to proceeding with construction, to submit plans to the Commission for its review. The Commission's review covers all aspects of the project, including planning and design matters.

History/Legislation

In 1993, Public Law 103-163 authorized the Air Force Memorial Foundation to establish an Air Force Memorial in the Washington region (the Air Force is the only service without a memorial in the Nation's Capital). In 1996, the Commission granted conceptual design approval of the proposed Air Force Memorial at Arlington Ridge, in Arlington, Virginia. The memorial was to be located between two existing memorials – the Netherlands Carillion and the U.S. Marine Corps (Iwo Jima) Memorial. However, subsequent to NCPC conceptual approval, the Marine Corps and a group of nearby residents who objected to the memorial began a lengthy litigation process to stop the construction of the memorial.

In 2000, the AFMF began to explore an alternative location for the Air Force Memorial at the Navy Annex site, one of many locations considered during the early site location process, before the Arlington Ridge site was selected. There were a variety of factors which convinced the AFMF to reconsider the memorial's location: 1) the cost of additional litigation; 2) the time that would be required to build at Arlington Ridge; and, 3) the understanding that the memorial might be in jeopardy if another five-year extension was necessary (the expiration date of the authorizing legislation had already been extended to 2005). In December 2001, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 directed the Secretary of Defense to make

available up to three acres of land “...includ[ing] the promontory adjacent to, and the land underlying, Wing 8 of Federal Office Building #2 in the northeast quadrant of the Arlington Navy Annex.” The legislation gave the Secretary of Defense the exclusive authority in all matters relating to the siting and design of the memorial. Furthermore, the Act exempted the memorial from the requirements of the Commemorative Works Act.

Site

The promontory, or bluff, where the memorial will be located occupies the easternmost point of the Arlington Navy Annex site (also referred to as Federal Office Building 2 - FOB 2), which is improved with a surface parking lot, and Wing 8 of the Annex building. The three-acre site rises approximately 100 feet above the Pentagon. The site provides clear views of the Pentagon, Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), and the Monumental Core.

The Navy Annex property is bordered by Columbia Pike to the east, I-395 to the south, Southgate Road and ANC to the north and residential housing to the west. The Annex property is served by a Metro bus line and within walking distance of two Metro Stations – Pentagon City and the Pentagon, both on the Blue and Yellow line.

In preparation for the construction of the memorial, Wing 8 of FOB2 will be removed. The remainder of FOB 2 will be removed by 2010 and transferred to the Department of the Army for the expansion of Arlington National Cemetery.

Memorial Design

Following the passage of the legislation giving the AFMF the new memorial site location, the Foundation held a limited design competition with five architectural firms. The winning designer, James Ingo Freed, of Pei Cobb Freed and Partners, was also the architect for the memorial at Arlington Ridge. The winning design incorporates many of the images and symbols associated with the Air Force, such as the five-pointed star and references to the prevalence of the number three (the Air Force’s three core values, three core competencies and three key ingredients to Air Force Mission). In addition, the design of the main element of the memorial – the three soaring steel spires reaching into the sky – is reminiscent of a space launch or the Air Force Thunderbirds in the “bomb burst” formation.

Elements of the memorial design include:

- Three stainless steel spires measuring 270 feet, 232 feet and 202 feet on a triangular podium measuring 92 feet by 80 feet by 80 feet. The base of the largest spire is 13 feet, 6 inches.
- A 9-foot glass-walled open air chamber with inscriptions on the podium between the base of the spires.
- A five -pointed star in the pavement at the center of the open-air chamber.
- A central parade ground.

- A 12-foot chapel-like contemplation area in glass at the northern end of the parade ground.
- A 9-foot honor guard statue at the southern end of the parade ground.
- A 10-foot granite backdrop walls with inscriptions behind the contemplation area and the honor guard.
- Stone seating/steps west of the parade ground facing the memorial and the Monumental Core.
- Retention of some of the existing mature landscaping and significant additional plantings.
- Two small buildings – 1,000 square feet combined – for restrooms, a small office, information kiosk and mechanical equipment.
- Entrance gate on Columbia Pike, with a lay-by (the parking area will not be accessible to the public until post-2010 when the ANC expands to include the Annex property).
- Granite signage wall along entrance walk from Columbia Pike.
- Parking area under the tree canopy for up to 25 vehicles, and bus parking in the turn around.
- Off-site parking in the existing lots across Columbia Pike prior to ANC management.

The estimated cost of the memorial will be approximately 29 million dollars, and construction is expected to commence in the fall of 2004, with a proposed dedication date of September 18, 2006 – the 59th Anniversary of the U.S. Air Force.

Activities/Initiatives Surrounding the Annex Site

There are a number of planning-related activities occurring in and around the 36-acre Navy Annex property at the present time.

Legislation/Navy Annex Master Plan

The Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2000 legislated that on or before 2010 the entire Navy Annex property will be transferred from the Department of Defense to the Department of the Army for expansion of the Arlington National Cemetery. Subsequent Acts, as well as the most recent Authorization Act of 2003 withholds a four-acre portion of the Annex site, south of Columbia Pike for a future memorial or a museum, provided that it is compatible with ANC and the Air Force Memorial. DoD is also required to complete a master plan for the Annex property no later than July of 2003 and that planning process is now underway.

Pentagon Master Plan

The Department of Defense has also just begun the process of revising the master plan for the Pentagon Reservation. To the extent possible, both master plan processes will be run concurrently. One project in the early planning stages on the Pentagon Reservation and within visual proximity to the proposed Air Force Memorial is the Memorial to the Victims of September 11th, 2001. This memorial will be located between the western façade of the Pentagon and Route 27 (Washington Boulevard). A design competition for the memorial was held and on March 4th the winning design was announced. The design features 184-cantilevered

benches each engraved with the name of one of the victims positioned to follow the flight path of the hijacked jet arranged according to the victim's ages. Maple trees will surround the benches giving the memorial a feeling of privacy and serenity.

Arlington County

Arlington County Government is also interested in establishing a memorial to the September 11th, 2001 victims and rescue personnel impacted by the terrorist attack on the Pentagon. The County has identified a preferred location for the half-acre memorial off of Columbia Pike, on Navy Annex property; however, the site is federally owned and to date there are no plans to construct this memorial.

Another on going plan in Arlington County is the Columbia Pike Initiative, created in 1998 to address the lack of investment in the Columbia Pike Corridor and develop a plan to proactively revitalize Columbia Pike. While the study does not directly address the portions of Columbia Pike adjacent to the Annex property, the goal of the Initiative – to build a safer, cleaner, more competitive and vibrant Columbia Pike community – should have positive impacts on the Air Force Memorial.

EVALUATION

The Commission has long been involved with the AFMF in their attempt to establish a memorial to the men and women of the U.S. Air Force in the Washington area, from the memorial's original location at Arlington Ridge to its present location at the Navy Annex. **In the opinion of staff, the new site, as well as the new design, gracefully evokes the symbolism associated with flight and with the United States Air Force. The design also enhances this already spectacular site on the escarpment of Washington's Monumental Core.** The skyline of Washington will be clearly visible from nearly every vantage point within the memorial, while from Washington the delicate spires will be visible – but not visually obtrusive. The design incorporates both traditional memorial elements, such as the parade ground and the wall inscriptions, and modern elements, such as the three stainless steel spires rising to a maximum height of 270 feet. **The proposed Air Force Memorial will also provide a striking gateway into the Nation's Capitol from Virginia. Staff supports the design of the new Air Force Memorial.**

The memorial fulfills many of the goals outlined in the Commission's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* (2M) – from establishing a new gateway into the Nation's Capital to memorializing significant national achievements. The master plan identifies the Navy Annex site as one of 20 prime sites on which to locate a significant museum or memorial. The Air Force Memorial will not only help to create a sense of arrival into the Monumental Core, but will also be a complementary addition to ANC, where many of the Air Force casualties are honored.

There is one element of the memorial – the statuary honor guard – that is incompatible with the abstract contemporary design of the Air Force Memorial. While military figures are common at many military or service memorials, staff believes it is inappropriate at the proposed location. The Air Force image is eloquently portrayed in the simple and elegant forms of the memorial and

the sweeping, open quality of the designed landscape. Furthermore, staff suggests that the honor guard statuary may interfere with the ceremonies and activities that will take place on the parade ground, activities that will include live honor guards in processional activities. As a result of this design incompatibility, staff urges that DoD and AFMF remove the honor guard statuary.

There are a number of ongoing planning related activities around the Navy Annex property that will impact, and be impacted by, the new memorial. Below is a discussion of these activities, as well as recommendations for additional information and study as the design development of the memorial progresses.

ANC and the Navy Annex and Pentagon Master Plans

As noted above, DoD is in the process of developing a master plan for the entire Navy Annex property, as well as updating the master plan for the Pentagon. The Annex master plan will incorporate the Air Force Memorial, potentially identify a site for another memorial or museum, and determine where the future ANC burials will be located. The master plan for the Annex site must be completed by the summer of 2003, when DoD reports back to Congress. Revisions to the existing Pentagon master plan will consist of a number of projects currently underway or in the early planning stages, such as: the realignment of Route 110, the new secure access road to the remote delivery facility and the Memorial to the Victims of September 11th.

Given the anticipated changes in the vicinity of the Navy Annex site, including the future revitalization of Columbia Pike in Arlington County, as well as the construction of two or three new memorials and the expansion of ANC, staff believes that there is a unique opportunity to create a visitor destination node in and around the Pentagon and the Navy Annex site. While the visual connections between all of the sites may be somewhat clear, the physical connections are greatly compromised because of the intricate system of highways in the area. One of the biggest challenges will be encouraging visitors to use Metro and creating well-designed, and safe, pedestrian connections between all of the sites. To that end, DoD should work with Metro, VDOT and the Arlington County government, as well as ANC, to develop an urban design plan that will encourage visitors to visit all of the sites.

Memorial Height

In determining the proposed height of the memorial, the AFMF carefully studied the proportions of each spire with the objective of selecting the heights that would evoke a feeling of graceful soaring. To the AFMF, this soaring effect is accomplished when the tallest spire reaches a height of 270 feet, and the other two spires reach 231 feet and 201 feet respectively. As a comparison, the maximum height of the memorial (270 feet) is 18 feet lower than the top of the dome of the U.S. Capitol and 31 feet lower than the top of the Washington Cathedral. However, the perception one will have of the Air Force Memorial is much more delicate because the memorial has significantly less mass than the Capitol or the Cathedral. For example, the triangular diameter of the largest spire measures roughly 13 feet on each side. The spires are located on a triangular podium measuring 92 feet by 80 feet by 80 feet, and each spire is separated by at least 55 feet. Although the base, middle and top dimensions of each spire is unique, the top of each

spire narrows to roughly 2-feet, plus-or-minus, on each side. The applicant has included a number of photo simulations to demonstrate how the memorial will be perceived from many locations in Virginia and from the Monumental Core.

The portions of the proposed memorial that are above 200 feet are located within a little used flight path to National Airport. Because AFMF felt strongly that the height should exceed 200 feet in order to make the spires have a soaring quality, the Foundation requested a waiver from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to construct the memorial within the flight path. In early February 2003, FAA determined that the memorial would not be a hazard to air navigation, and that AFMF could proceed with plans to construct the memorial.

Memorial Lighting

Because the memorial will be located in a flight path, the spires will need to be illuminated at night. This is often accomplished by installing a red flashing light, although it is unknown at this time whether a red light would have to be installed on each of the three spires. While the flashing red light may be acceptable on the 555-foot Washington Monument, staff would suggest that the Foundation carefully study other lighting solutions that complement the memorial's gracefulness and simplicity. One possibility might be up-lighting the spires. Another might be illuminating the tip of each spire from within, as was recently done for the 220-foot Spire of Dublin in Dublin, Ireland. AFMF and DoD should include nighttime simulations that depict the preferred lighting scheme with the next submission. FAA should also be consulted once a final lighting design is selected.

COORDINATION

Air Force Memorial Foundation Outreach

The AFMC has briefed relevant state and local governments, elected officials and nearby neighborhood associations that the future memorial will impact. The AFMF may hold a public meeting in association with the Navy Annex Site Environmental Assessment should there be significant public comment.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts will review the design concept for the Air Force Memorial at their March 20, 2003 meeting.

CONFORMANCE

Memorials and Museums Master Plan

The Air Force Memorial will be located at one of the 20 prime sites identified in the Commission's 2001 *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*. The master plan describes the entire 36-acre Annex complex and its urban design conditions as follows:

The location represents a potential major gateway. The hilltop setting of these potential sites provide dramatic views over the Pentagon and into the L'Enfant City. The hillside on which Federal Building 2 is located is a prominent location that is highly visible from Columbia Pike and I-395. Proximity to the southern limits of Arlington National Cemetery affords a distinguished landscape setting and suggests an opportunity to complement the adjoining setting with a related commemorative use.

This area would create a signature portal between Washington and Virginia, particularly as viewed from the vehicular approach from I-395.

The master plan also outlines specific design considerations for the Navy Annex site, two of which are relevant to the Air Force Memorial:

- The design of the memorial...could define and establish a new gateway near the border of Washington and Virginia. Due to the site's strategic location, the distinctive topographic and visual features of the site create a sense of arrival into the Monumental Core from Virginia.
- The size and scale of this site provide ample opportunities for a major memorial or museum that would emphasize significant national achievements and sacrifices such as those honored today at Arlington National Cemetery.

Two general policies for new museums and memorials are relevant to the Air Force Memorial:

- Prominent sites, such as promontories and broad intersections, should be reserved for significant memorials.
- Locating commemorative works close to other civic projects will likely increase tourism and educational opportunities.

The proposed Air Force Memorial meets many of the objectives outlined in 2M, from its thematic relevance and connection to Arlington National Cemetery to its ability to capitalize on the site's spectacular location and gateway qualities.

National Historic Preservation Act

DoD has initiated Section 106 consultation with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to consider the effects of the proposed memorial on historic resources. These resources include the Pentagon, Arlington National Cemetery, and the GWMP. Staff recommends that DoD and AFMF include the DC SHPO in its coordination efforts for the assessment of potential visual effects of the memorial from the Monumental Core.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Air Force Memorial Foundation and the Department of Defense, as the responsible federal

agency for the proposal, are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA). The plan should be released in mid-March 2003.

DoD was directed by Congress to make available up to three acres of the Navy Annex property to the Air Force Memorial Foundation for the U.S. Air Force Memorial. The site is identified in the Commission's approved *Memorials and Museum Master Plan* approved August 30, 2001. Further evaluation of the location will be included in the EA, which will evaluate development of the preliminary design. The public and other appropriate local government and federal agencies will be given an opportunity to comment on that NEPA review prior to submitting the preliminary design to the Commission.

Staff recommends to DoD and the Air Force Memorial Foundation that the memorial effort demonstrate full environmental stewardship to the best abilities reflective of the Air Force as a service branch. This would include such efforts in the development of the project as:

- Consider the potential environmental impacts the proposal will have upon the surrounding environment, neighboring communities and cultural and natural resources.
- Pay particular attention to impacts on water quality such as increased storm water runoff and increased erosion potential. Other environmental aspects include noise and ambient visual impacts to and from the site location.
- Consider the functional relationship of the proposed site in relation to existing facilities to minimize transportation requirements and to provide opportunities for shared use of common areas, such as parking, wherever possible.
- Understand the microclimate of the site and identify where there is potential for sustainable design based on temperature and solar orientation issues.
- Consider the potential for producing alternative forms of electricity. For example, the visitor information kiosk or the small office facility may be good candidates for the use of photovoltaics.
- Consider the vegetation and topography of the location, striving to incorporate indigenous plant material.